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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [SOCY](#) [PHUM](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: BAS-CONGO UPDATE

REF: A. KINSHASA 300
[1](#)B. KINSHASA 272
[1](#)C. KINSHASA 243
[1](#)D. KINSHASA 218

Classified By: PolCouns D. Brown, reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Following recent violence involving militants of the political-religious movement Bundu dia Kongo (BDK) and Congolese police forces (reftels), focus is now on investigating claims of excessive use of force and the steps needed for political reconciliation. MONUC currently expects to release its report on the clashes this week. The Kinshasa press has highlighted both the alleged discovery of mass graves in the province and the intention of BDK leader Ne Muanda Nsemi to refer the recent and previous incidents of violence in Bas-Congo to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Following Interior Minister Denis Kalume's briefing on the government's view of the violence, the National Assembly voted to recommend holding a peace, security, and economic development conference on Bas-Congo. End summary

[1](#)2. (C) The situation in Bas-Congo province has remained calm following recent violence involving militants of the political-religious movement BDK and Congolese police forces. Focus has now turned to investigations of the claims of excessive use of force by police and the steps needed for political reconciliation. MONUC currently expects to release its report on the clashes this week; until then, staffers are remaining tight-lipped on firm instructions from the SRSG to avoid another embarrassing leak of a MONUC Bas-Congo investigation (ref B).

[1](#)3. (C) Kinshasa press reports have highlighted the alleged discovery of mass graves in the province. Amigo Ngonde, President of the African Association for the Defense of Human Rights, told us on April 17 that four mass graves have been found containing as many as 85 bodies. MONUC's lead Bas-Congo analyst noted the same day that a military observation team had found evidence of a possible mass grave in Materne, north of the port of Boma. The day after the team had initially left to observe the area, the site was secured by police and part of the ground appeared to have been dug up.

[1](#)4. (C) Press reports have made much of BDK spiritual leader Ne Muanda Nsemi's rhetoric on referring the recent and previous incidents of violence in Bas-Congo to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Local ICC Administrator Roberto Bucciatti confirmed to us on April 17 that the Court has neither received a specific referral from Nsemi nor intends to take up this matter.

[1](#)5. (U) Interior Minister Kalume briefed the National Assembly

March 26-27 on the government's view of the violence and outlined a stinging indictment against the BDK and Nsemi. Kalume charged that Nsemi bears principal responsibility for the recent clashes. Nsemi, himself a National Assembly deputy, took the floor in turn to denounce the actions of the police and "genocide" of the Kongo people. The Assembly voted to recommend holding a peace, security, and economic development conference on Bas-Congo.

¶6. (C) The way forward on such a conference and the government's will to hold one is not yet clear, a counselor to National Assembly President Kamerhe told us on April 12. Separately, the political advisor to UN Secretary General's Special Representative Alan Doss reported April 16 that MONUC is working behind the scenes with politicians and civil society in Bas-Congo to ensure that political dialogue continues.

¶7. (C) Comment: Reliable information as to the casualty figures from the recent violence and who bears responsibility has been extremely difficult to come by. MONUC's report should shed some light on this point. While the situation appears calm for the moment, the recent history of violence between Congolese forces and the BDK in Bas-Congo remains unresolved in the absence of significant political and economic advances. End comment
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